

Method and Apparatus for Feature Rights Management in a Multilevel Hierarchy

Abstract

A multilevel hierarchical feature rights management system (100) provides an efficient way of allocating feature keys. Sub-agents (140) are provisioned or activated with application software having features. The sub-agents request permissions from feature rights management agents (120) to use these features. The feature rights management agents (120) receive feature keys over a network (130) from a feature rights server (110). The feature rights management agents (120) then permit sub-agents (140) to use their provisioned features. In a further aspect of the invention the sub-agents (140) voluntarily release feature permissions rather than the server (110) or the agents (120) forcing the sub-agents (140) to revoke rights.